

The SL Arts and Life Magazine

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It's Zyngo,
Not Zynga, Silly
Gudrun Gausman



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I Wanna Be An
SL Gazillionaire
Sedona Mills

Gentleman on Ice
Harry Bailey

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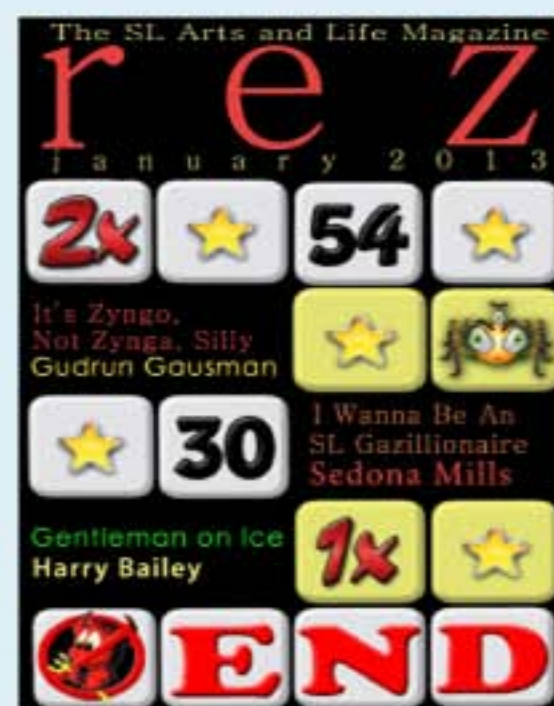
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CONTENTS

- **Editor's Note:** Flor Nachtigal introduces the issue.
- **So You Wanna Be an SL Gazillionaire!:**
Sedona Mills discusses what it takes to be rich in SL.
- **It's Zyngo, Not Zynga, Silly:** Gudrun Gausman continues the theme of money with a thoughtful analysis of the game of chance in SL, and the prospects of winning.
- **The Business Model From Hell:** When it comes to begging in SL, Flor Nachitigal gives her thoughts about the costs and benefits of getting something for nothing.
- **Gentleman on Ice:** The Perfect Gentleman, Harry Bailey, directs us to the finest winter sims in SL.
- **A Lack of Art:** Microfiction for our readers from the incomparable Crap Mariner.
- **Encroaching:** Drover Mahogany gets inside our heads with a disturbing story of helplessness and lack of control.

About the Cover:

Jami Mills snapped this photo of a local Zyngo parlor, where legions of Zyngo machines stretch as far as the eye can see



Dear Friends,

First of all, and on behalf of the staff of rez, let me wish you all a happy 2013. May the new year bring you happiness in your second and first lives.

As this new year starts, our minds were on the riches to be had in Second Life. Three of us, Sedona Mills, Gudrun Gausman and myself, approached the topic from very different angles. The most obvious approach to riches is to earn them, through hard work. Sedona Mills shares her thoughts on what hard work can achieve in SL, and if indeed you can become rich here, and what that will take. I'll not give away Sedona's conclusions here, but she finds there is more than one way to be rich in SL, depending on what your priorities are.

Gudrun takes a long hard look at Zyngo, purportedly a game of skill. Or is it gambling after all? Yes, she discusses all the misunderstandings and pitfalls one may be subject to when playing Zyngo - and yet it too is there to be enjoyed, if not to acquire riches.

Last in line is my article on the business model from hell, namely begging. Thinking through an encounter with a beggar left me wondering what she was actually after, and whether asking people for money fulfills that need, whatever it is.

The Perfect Gentleman, Harry Bailey found January the time for winter sports, even in a virtual world. And in his column, *Gentleman on Ice*, he tells you where to look, and what for, if you feel your life will be enriched by playing in virtual snow.

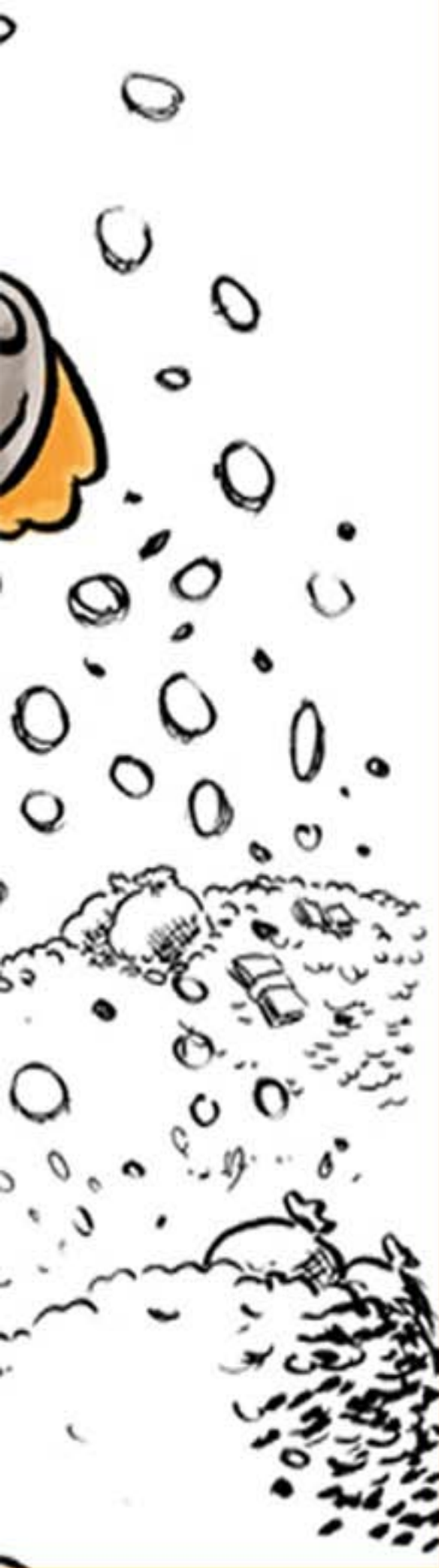
The issue ends on a rather more serious note, with the poem *Encroaching*, by Drover Mahogany. He leaves us with a stark reminder that the riches we have are not ours to enjoy in peace and forever.

Enjoy this issue of rez and the new year!

Flor Nachtigal



So You Wanna Be A
by Sedona Mill



This may be cheating but when I thought about what to write about this month, I thought of something I wrote for my long-forgotten blog many years ago. So to start off my thoughts on ruling the economic world of Second Life, I thought I would include the contents of that post first. It really shows some insight into the thoughts of a much younger and more naive Sedona Mills. Here is the post in my blog affectionately labeled "A Dancer's Life."

An SL
S

Gazillionaire!

Let's just say that I sure was fooled when I first came to Second Life. Making money, real money in Second Life is just as hard as making money in the "real" world. In fact, I tend to think it's much more difficult. While I'm sure that many people have made money in Second Life, I tend to think most of them make enough just to pay the tier exacted by Linden Labs, or the rent they pay to greedy landlords, or not so greedy landlords.

I have many new women coming to me asking me how to make money in a virtual world. The biggest problem I see is that many do not have or wish to learn the skills or make the investment that it takes to earn a virtual living. Other than camping or becoming a skilled and lucky Zyngo player, every money making venture requires an investment of time and capital.

Let's take the example of a dancer, or even a club host. Many say that either job doesn't make a lot of money. Well, that's not entirely true. I danced and brought in over one thousand Lindens a week, sometimes in a night. Now before I get a plethora of comments about

that being nothing, to a new member of the Lindonean race one thousand Lindens is quite a bit of cash. So yeah, you can make money in this virtual world. And at four thousand Lindens a month you have enough to invest in a small plot of Linden Land and have some cash left over.

But before you can make that kind of cash, you need to invest. You need a decent shape. You need at least one (and preferably more than one) top notch skin to cover that shape. You need clothes. While freebie clothes may do for a start, don't expect customers to throw Lindens your way until you really invest in good sexy lingerie and exotic wear. Hair, oh yes. Not that spiky worm like hair.. oh no.. you need the good stuff. How about shoes, belts, jewelry and dances!! Before you know it, you have invested at least a few



thousand Lindens into your avatar to make it look good.

Now jumping on a dance pole and wiggling your ass isn't going to get you rolling in the dough. Most people, that's men AND women (are you ready for that too?), need a little verbal stimulus. You have to be good at getting them turned on. And not virtually turned on! You have to invoke a REAL

the woman you're turning on could be a man in real life, or vice versa). You have no moral issues about going nakie when the coins drop into the till. Let's say you learn to emote. You know how to start a conversation and how to keep it entertaining. You're doing everything right and yes, you're making three hundred to one thousand a night. Now what are you going to do with all of that cash?

Now jumping on a dance pole and wiggling your ass isn't going to get you rolling in the dough.

feeling in this person you're wishing to extract money from. Because like you, they know that Lindens have real value too. You have to give them the feelings they came seeking you out for. And what are those feelings? You have to find out! Does this sound easy? Let me tell you, it's not. So, after dropping a couple thousand now you have to LEARN how to turn on the person on the other side of that avatar with your words. Are you ready to spend another valuable resource, your time, to learn that skill?

No, even a simple job like dancing in the virtual world can have a steep learning curve. But let's say you are open-minded. You have no issue turning on men and women (remember, we're talking about really turning them on now, not virtually; and know that

Here is where it gets interesting. You dance to earn cash. Why? To spend the cash of course. So you do. You spend your hard earned Lindens on.. CLOTHES! That's right, because while you are dancing in yet that same ol' bra n' panty set, the girl next to you is in that super-hot latex second skin with just enough exposed to make YOU a little warm. And you want one too because all of a sudden, she is making more tips than you. And her boots!! Wow.. if you only had boots like that. And her hair and her skin and prim nails.. Raggedy Ann looks better than you next to her. So you take your hard earned money and you buy clothes. And not clothes that you can wear anywhere, nope. You buy "stripper clothes."

Now the vicious circle is complete. You

are dancing to earn money so that you can purchase items that allow you to be a better dancer and earn money. So, what is a dancer to do? Well, there is always modeling or escorting. Good luck with that too!

mony work is that a single Linden is incredibly cheap when compared to any real world value. Okay, I hear you saying “dammit Sed, not another analogy to that other place where bad things happen! I love my fantasy!” So do I, but in comparison to real wealth, a Linden or even many of them are

Linden Labs is nothing more than a giant, extremely advanced Web hosting service

Boy it sure sounds like the Sedona of yesteryear was a fairly cynical woman! Well, not really. When I wrote that, many realizations were coming to me. I had an epiphany of sorts - - that no matter how hard you work in Second Life, doing the typical jobs one does here is not going to make you financially independent. I became a student in the Second Life economy and I found that in reality there are two economies in play here.

1. The Linden Economy: Wealth in SL is based on the accumulation of Lindens, our in-world currency. Everything can be purchased with Lindens and, in truth, many created in-world items are very cheap or even free. But what makes this economy thrive is not the massive consumer market or the desire people have to accumulate “things.” What make this eco-

pretty cheap. I feel discussing the other economy will bring some light to my reasoning around this.

2. The Land Economy: While everything in the Linden economy is considered virtual, everything dealing with the land economy is not. The big irony about our little fantasy world is that, in truth, it is directly tied to real life value and wealth. In simplistic terms, the wealth you pay for your virtual land is really nothing more than you paying for computer resources. That’s right; in truth, Linden Labs is nothing more than a giant, extremely advanced web hosting service and Second Life is, in a sense, a social network for the anonymous.

So, the genie is out of the bottle here. You may be thinking I’m full of crap because you can “play” in Second Life for free. You can accumulate crap for

free. You can do everything for free in Second Life and still participate just about fully in the environment that Linden Labs provides. And you're correct if you look at the investment you made AFTER you log in. But what about before you log in? Ask yourself this: when you purchased your computer did you think about its capabilities? If you were logging into our lovely virtual universe when deciding to purchase your computer, I bet you made damn well sure that it could run the SL client you use in probably the high or the "OMG it looks so real" mode. Because shadows are important too.

You may not realize it, but what real value you invested in before you even log into Second Life is part of the land economy too. Hopefully, by now you are beginning to see my point. The land economy is directly tied to the real world economy! Land in Second Life has nothing to do with the social experiment I've talked about in earlier

or use free land. Everybody pays some real value to be a part of the Lindens' virtual 3D anonymous "Facebook."

So do the two economies I've laid out have zero relationship to each other? We all know that you can convert Lindens to real currency and that real currency can purchase Lindens. But is a Linden actually considered "currency". Linden Labs says it's not. They consider Lindens "tokens" used for the transfer of virtual items in their virtual universe. Personally, I disagree with that premise. I spend Lindens each month to lease land that I can use to make a virtual home. Those Lindens are used by my landowner, converted to real capital, to lease the server that allows my land to exist; with a tidy profit she keeps for herself I'm sure.

So why would anyone want to become a SL gazillionaire? Most likely for the same reason I discussed in my blog article. Because those "tokens" are really

...and Second Life is, in a sense, a social network for the anonymous

columns. Land in Second Life has nothing to do with the virtual goodies that end up in your inventory. Land in Second Life exists so that Second Life can exist. And EVERY single person pays for that economy, regardless of whether you actually own, lease, rent

just like the tokens I use in my real life. But we call them coins, or dollar bills. And if I made a gazillion of them in Second Life. I could probably pay for at least my bi-weekly trip to the nail salon. Yeah, I want nails like Sedona has now! Well, not as long. So the question came back to me. If I could get pretty nails via Second Life, how

would I do it? What economy should I invest in? Do I invest in the Linden economy or the land economy? My answer really came down to this; how much real world financial risk am I willing to take?

Either way, I knew that any investment I made becoming rich in Second Life would entail a cost. Again my blog article clearly spells this out. It could be a financial cost or a personal cost in time and energy spent learning skills to accomplish the task at hand to acquire the virtual wealth I desired. If I take the financial risk, then to me the land economy seemed the prudent choice. I'm already in for a dime, why not for a dollar so to speak. I've spent the money to have the computer necessary to invest my time in SL, so why not invest more in hopes of getting a return? I did this for a while. Basically land flipping with some financial partners and I did find it very rewarding financially. But the costs and risk compared to the Linden economy was huge and I found I didn't have the stomach for it. Second Life wasn't as much fun for me as I always worried if my tier costs would kill any profit from my flip if I held onto the land too long. So I gracefully exited that scene.

I then turned to the Linden side of the economy. I first looked at building content. I tried clothing, homes, anything. I even pursued scripting, as I have a

real talent for computer programming. While I feel with time and energy I could become a great creator of content, the time involved in learning the skills and coming up with the imaginative designs required more than my real life allowed. And I just don't have the patience to keep a long term vision relevant in my priorities. I'm sure if you ask Sky, she will agree with me on that.

My last attempt was to try the typical route of starting a club. Since SL is a big ass social washing machine, I felt a well-designed club, managed properly with just the right theme surely would be profitable. The club I came up with (which was actually a resort) was successful. We had a good sized following and anybody that came always said they loved it there and had a great time. But two problems cropped up. The first was that running a club full time was like having a second job. I would at times regret logging onto SL because I knew I had to deal with personnel issues or plan events or, God forbid, do accounting. Managing a club is work! And I work hard enough in my real life. My other problem was that while we got paid in Linden economy currency, I had to pay out costs in land economy currency. Since a dollar is about two hundred and sixty times more in value than a Linden, whatever Lindens we took in barely made a dent in our tier costs. So I paid a lot of my real world cash (my business partner paid a lot

more) to keep the club open and expanding. In the end, I just didn't see the reason to pay to do something that seemed like a job to me. So I closed the club down.

person.

The personal gain I speak of is not Sedona's, but of her puppeteer: me. A couple of months back, Harry Bailey wrote an article for rez called "What



Do all of my failures (or learning experiences as I like to call them) mean you cannot become a gazillionaire in Second Life? Absolutely you can! If you look at the first two attempts you will see had I had the entrepreneurial spirit or patience to keep to a long range goal I'm sure I would be hip deep in Lindens by now. But since I don't, does this mean I'll never have any wealth in Second Life? No, I have tremendous wealth in SL. My wealth does not come in the form of financial treasure. It comes in the form of gain to me as a

Would Friday Do?" Reading this article made me think about how Sedona's life in SL affected my own. When I came to Second Life I strived to make Sedona's personality my own, but with a twist. She would be less critical of people, more patient with them, and more understanding and caring of others not like me. I knew those traits were inside of me - - I just needed to be in a place where exercising them would produce less real emotional risk to myself. Could I open myself up to others, be more empathetic and be that "sweet

little girl” my mother always reminded me I was?

It’s been over five years now. Sed has always been here. She has always been active. And after reading Harry’s article, I reflected back and thought how often in my real life did I ask myself “what would Sedona do in this situation.” My answer was not always “the” answer, but it always gave me pause to look at the real life situation in another perspective. I get asked a lot how do I keep my interest in Second Life for so long with the same avatar. I do because I still meet great people every day, have wonderful virtual experiences (no, not sex) with my friends, and find amazing creations that come from people’s imagination from all over the world. So did I ever meet my goal of becoming a gazillionaire in Second Life? If you say yes, you’re damn right I did! I’ve gained more personal wealth in SL than I

could ever imagine. And I do so for less than a night out every month. My return on my investment has been remarkable.

I am a gazillionaire in Second Life. But in ways I didn’t even think existed.

Postscript:

The column was very difficult for me to write. Not because of any inner demon I have to slay or because of this columns’ content, but due to the tragic events in Newtown, CT. My hopes and well wishes go out to everyone touched by this horrible act. SM

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"Slut with Butterflies"



CAT'S BEACH GALLERY
Cat Boccaccio, SL Photographer

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Zebaine%20Island/94/30/22>



It's Zynngo, No Devil

L\$ 500





What's Your Issue?

a monthly advice column by
Gudrun Gausman

Dear Gudrun -

I was going through a really rough time in life a few years ago, and I found solace in a few things. Drinking and gambling seemed to ease my pain and dry my tears. But then somehow things turned ugly. My pain in certain areas disappeared, but I created new struggles and aches in other areas. I began to feel like an idiot. I felt stupid and guilty and helpless. My enjoyment didn't last for very long, and I lost the ability to have much of a say in my habits. My habits slowly drained all of my energy and took my life away from me.

Well I'm here to say that I shook that all off, and am ready to live – and that includes feeling my feelings instead of running away from them. My drinking is under control, and I still enjoy playing games, but prefer not to risk money. I am a Second Life resident. I see Zyngo everywhere, and I see people bet small amounts and win a lot. Is it simply one of those fun social games, or would it reignite the fires of my gambling addiction?

Sincerely, Loser

Dear Winner –

Zyngo is a cross between a slot machine and Bingo, and it is ubiquitous in Second Life gaming parlors. It has nothing to do with the social gaming developer Zynga, which has created such narcotically addictive gems as Farmville and Bubble Safari. There are contests, but most Zyngo games are non-social... they are player vs. machine. This is not to say that Zyngo is not narcotically addictive as well. All gambling is addictive.

it's based on pure probability. In the past, Zyngo even had an "auto-play" setting on many machines, which both pulled the handle and covered the squares for you. In the end, this was too egregious even for LL, and has been outlawed.

There are a lot of variations on Zyngo. I only play actual Zyngo, and I prefer the "No Devil" version. (In the "Devil" Classic or Wyld versions, a devil randomly appears and takes part of your score :-<) I have lost lots of Zyngo games, but I have won lots. I don't kid

If anyone tells you they make a living playing Zyngo, they are lying...

Oddly, Zyngo is still permitted in SL. This is because Linden Labs considers it a game of skill. The game creator (Aargyle Zymurgy) pursued this issue with LL. He had 5 experienced players play 5 novices... Surprise!!! The veteran players got higher scores. But what has that got to do with a single player trying to achieve a set score? There are a few contests between players... but most machines are set up for single players trying for an instant payout.

Zyngo IS gambling; it is not a game of skill. As in Bingo, attention span and method CAN increase your score, but is a slot machine a game of skill? No,

myself, and I don't bet large amounts, but my bigger wins have been L\$30K, L\$20K, and L\$10K, and I have had several of those L\$20K and L\$10K wins. I don't keep track of lesser wins, but I DO keep souvenirs of the bigger ones. Of course, part of the beauty of SL in general is that the Linden is only worth 4/10 of a cent (or 4.108 mills). The only other places besides SL that "mills" are used today are gas station prices, grocery store coupons, and tax computations.

If anyone tells you they make a living playing Zyngo, they are lying, possibly to entice you into Zyngo parlors they



own. If they do own a Zyngo parlor, they may actually be making money on Zyngo, but not by playing it. Like all games of chance, Zyngo is set up so the house wins (unless the owner screwed up his setup). Of course, the players do win a certain percentage of the time, but they don't win more than they (or someone else) have lost. The game actually has a "stop-loss" setting to prevent the house from losing, so if you find a disabled machine, that's why it's disabled.

Each game is an independent event. What does this mean? Within the realm of large numbers, you will win a certain percentage of the time. However, if you have a 1:2 chance of winning, you won't necessarily lose one and then win one. You might lose 50 before winning the next (if you have any money left to bet). Or, if you have lost 10 games, the next player on that same machine may win, instead of you,

or may not. I guess you hafta keep playing, otherwise you won't know, LOL.

Independent Events

When two events are independent, the occurrence of one in no way affects the probability of the other occurring. An overly discrete example of two independent events is as follows: say you rolled a die and flipped a coin. The probability of getting any number face on the die in no way influences the probability of getting a head or a tail on the coin. But events don't require that kind of physical separation to be independent. If a "fair" coin (whatever that is) is tossed two times, the probability that a head comes up on the second toss is $1/2$ regardless of whether or not a head came up on the first toss (unless, of course, the coin isn't really fair at all, which is probably the case since probably none are).

Dependent Events

When two events are dependent, one event occurring directly influences the likelihood of the other event. For example, there are 4 aces in a deck of 52 cards. If you were to draw a card from the deck and it was an ace, the probability of drawing a second ace would be greatly changed, and for that matter, the probability of drawing any other card would also be changed.

Within a Zyngo game, there is some dependency within the game itself...

But the outcome of any entire game is independent of the outcome of any other game.

Gambler's Fallacy

A coin is flipped five times and comes up heads each time. What is the probability that it will come up heads on the sixth flip? The correct answer is, of course, $\frac{1}{2}$ (unless it is a loaded coin, or maybe just a normal totally uneven coin). But many people believe that a tail will be more likely to occur after throwing five heads. Their reasoning

PLAYER REWARDS

PLAYERS CAMP INFO BOARD

AMOUNT PAID: L\$ 4371164

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 541

TOTAL GAME PLAYED: 21114

TIME REMAINING:
0 Days 5 Hours 13 Minutes

Level 1: L\$3k - 15k
Level 2: L\$15k - 50k
Level 3: L\$50k - 100k
Level 4: L\$100k - 300k
Level 5: L\$300k - 750k
Level 6: L\$750k +

[FIND IN RANKING](#)

[MANAGE BOARD](#)

LEVEL 5 CAMP BOARD

Best Max L\$ 1000
Percent Made: L\$ 100/10
Total Players: 0
Level In: 0

[Log-in/out](#)
[FIND IN RANKING](#)
[MANAGE BOARD](#)

LEVEL 6 CAMP BOARD

Best Max L\$ 1000
Percent Made: L\$ 100/10
Total Players: 0
Level In: 0

[Log-in/out](#)
[FIND IN RANKING](#)
[MANAGE BOARD](#)

LEVEL 3 CAMP BOARD

Best Max L\$ 100
Percent Made: L\$ 10/10
Total Players: 0
Level In: 0

[Log-in/out](#)
[FIND IN RANKING](#)
[MANAGE BOARD](#)

LEVEL 4 CAMP BOARD

Best Max L\$ 100
Percent Made: L\$ 10/10
Total Players: 0
Level In: 0

[Log-in/out](#)
[FIND IN RANKING](#)
[MANAGE BOARD](#)

LEVEL 1 CAMP BOARD

Best Max L\$ 10
Percent Made: L\$ 10/10
Total Players: 0
Level In: 0

[Log-in/out](#)
[FIND IN RANKING](#)
[MANAGE BOARD](#)

LEVEL 2 CAMP BOARD

Best Max L\$ 10
Percent Made: L\$ 10/10
Total Players: 0
Level In: 0

[Log-in/out](#)
[FIND IN RANKING](#)
[MANAGE BOARD](#)

REPLAY PAYMENT BOARD

L\$ 147964

[ON/OFF](#) [MANAGE BOARD](#) [FIND IN RANKING](#)

Page: 11 of 43

Name	Bonus
001 000000 0000	00
002 000000 0000	00
003 000000 0000	00
004 000000 0000	00
005 000000 0000	00
006 000000 0000	00
007 000000 0000	00
008 000000 0000	00
009 000000 0000	00
010 000000 0000	00

Time to go: 11H, 14M

INSTANT PAYMENT BOARD

L\$ 59554

[ON/OFF](#) [MANAGE BOARD](#) [FIND IN RANKING](#) [CASH OUT](#)

Page: 11 of 44

Name	Bonus	Status
001 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
002 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
003 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
004 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
005 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
006 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
007 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
008 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
009 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT
010 000000 0000	00	CASH OUT

Time to go: 11H, 13M

stated more precisely, as the number of flips approaches infinity, the proportion of heads approaches 0.50. Doesn't this imply that there must be some natural adjustment occurring, compensating for a string of heads with the later occurrence of more tails? Uh, yea. But how long you gonna live? More to the point, how long is your money gonna last?

The machines themselves have a variety of settings managed by the machine owners. These include the price of the game, the winning score, the devil's appearance or lack thereof, and a stop-loss setting. If you find a disabled machine, it was disabled by stop-loss because it was in danger of paying out more than it took in.



Zyngo is run honestly. Does the Mafia control Zyngo? If it does, Zyngo is at least as honest as Vegas. Many of the big parlors have a Middle Eastern flavor (or at least clientele). Maybe Al-Qaeda controls Zyngo. In any case, the numbers are generated randomly by servers operated by the manufacturers of Zyngo machines.

Zyngo can involve no money or huge bucks. There are free-to-play machines. There are machines that take tiny bets. There are also machines that pay out 100X your investment. And there are machines where you can bet L\$25,000 and win L\$500,000. Payout percentages are high because the parlors have figured out that it is more profitable and better for traffic to hold small percentages of large amounts

than large percentages of small amounts. They would rather you bet 1000 and they keep 20% than have you bet 100 and keep 50%. In the short term, anything can happen. In the longer term, you may win.

But eventually, the house will profit.

At one of my favorite spas, which seems very successful, the following scores will produce the indicated payouts on bets of \$L1000:

Score	Payout	
69222	20000	20X
54333	10000	10X
48888	6000	6X
46888	5000	5X
41333	3000	3X
34333	2000	2X
29333	1500	1.5X

If a score of 34333 allows L\$1000 bettors to win 40% of the time, the parlor will make about L\$2000 every 10 games. You figure out the rest, LOL. Of course, a bet of more or less than \$L1000 will increase or decrease the house determined payout accordingly. And higher scores are harder to

achieve, so there are far fewer winners. I have seen projected win rates for various score, but none of them makes sense. Nevertheless, the owners no doubt have a good handle on it based upon experience. This same parlor pays L\$695 per month in advertising costs and L\$295 in land fees, so they are probably not losing money, and are probably making far more than the typical SL business.

Anyone who tells you Zyngo is skill-based with the player using math, deductive reasoning, memory, etc., is uttering nonsense. There are only three factors here: the amount paid; the winning score; and the amount to be won. You are now armed with vast knowledge.

The main strategy I recommend is simply discipline. Set limits, don't bet more than you can afford to lose, and quit while you're ahead :=P

If you are truly addicted and want to gamble with dinner, you might try this:

<http://www.spinarecipe.com/#>

I vouch for NONE of their recipes.





p h

j a m i

n o t o g r a p h y

The Business Model From Hell



Story by

Flor Nachtigal

"Woops, sorry!"

"Sorry for what?"

"Barging into you like that."

"I'm not rezzed yet, I can't see you."

"That takes awhile here..."

"Mmmhmmmm."

"You look really cool!"

"Oh, thank you!"

(I wonder where this is going. After all, I'm in an upscale skin store and I'm being pinged by a random stranger.)

"I've been away from SL for about a year, and everything is different. But your avi is the nicest I've seen so far."

"Thanks, I guess....."

"Did you make her yourself?"

"Yes, mostly."

(I'm too surprised to realize my vanity is being played with.)

"Seriously, I have an eye for it. Yours is the best I've seen!"

"OK, thanks :)"

"I don't want you to think this is creepy.... but I was away for a year. I found a boy here, and we met in RL. We were fine in SL and on the phone, but in person he was just creepy and weird."

(Sharp left turn here. I really don't know where this goes now.)

"Well mixing two lives has its risks. It often goes strangely."

"Please don't think I'm weird for sharing my personal stuff."

"No, it's OK."

"I've been away for so long. Everything is changed. And mesh is so strange. I barely know who the best creators are anymore.... and anything in my old inventory is so outdated."

(A quick look at the profile and it checks out: No photo, a day old, no payment info, no profile text. One group that I don't recognize.)

"Hmm, it doesn't look that changed to me. When you're here all the time, maybe you don't realize? Anyway, this place has been here for awhile, and it's still good."

"Yeah, I'm starting over totally from scratch. And your avi is really well done. You should be proud of her."

"Believe me, I am."

"Ummmmmm..... could I ask you for a favor? Can you spot me 50 Lindens to upload a profile picture? I mean, no one wants to talk to me because my profile is empty. And we can be friends <3 <3."

(Doh. Random strangers are never friendly for no reason, and this is where vain people spend lots of Lindens. Geez, I should have known.)

"Sweets, I'll make you a pic if you want, but friends and money don't mix. Not even in SL."

(Silence)

(I go shopping, being vain and spending more than I wanted.)

(This encounter for some reason eats at me, and I can't quite put it to rest.)

"YOU ARE THE BITCH THAT TALKED A LOT OF TRASH TO MY DAUGHTER! DO YOU HAVE NO DIGNITY? IF YOU NEED MONEY GET A JOB. IMMA REPORT YOU, SCUM!"

(This lady is dressed to the nines, standing at the landing point, and screaming at the small pale figure in ill fitting black floppy clothes, whose name tag I now recognize as the girl

who has asked me for money.)

"Oh, come on. With drama like that, all you achieve is to make it worse."

(That is me speaking, trying to be the voice of reason. Mostly to appease myself though.)

"I'LL BEND OVER BACKWARDS, BUT I HATE BEING USED LIKE THIS. SOME PEOPLE HAVE NO SELF RESPECT!!!"

She went out of her w
and needy. I'm willin
time and money to cre

(And with that, she vanishes into the store, apparently still fuming. I look over the little beggar who stood there through this exchange, totally oblivious to everything. I go home in the vain pursuit of beauty, and dress myself in the empress' new skin.)

(OK, OK. I'll stop this OOC nonsense now.)

So, I'm home. I'm trying on my skin. I rerun that encounter in my head, I re-read the chat log, remember what the little beggar looked like. It's not sitting right. For one thing, she had a good

act. If she had played a beggar on a stage I might easily have tipped her the 50 Lindens she asked for, simply for the performance. Which means somehow the context made a difference to me.

But I look at the chat log, and admire the elegance. She gave herself a reason to talk to me in the first place. She flattered me. She kept me off balance. She made a personal connection of sorts. Very importantly, she snuck in the mention of good creators. Of

ay to look vulnerable
g to bet she invested
ate this beggar avatar.

course she needs landmarks to places where people spend lots of money, because she will be banned within hours, at most days. And then she needs somewhere else to go before she returns with a new avatar. And so she probed me for creators before asking for money. Well played, I recognize.

And then consider the avatar. She went out of her way to look vulnerable and needy. I'm willing to bet she invested time and money to create this beggar avatar. Even the name showed more thought than your average griever who will often randomly string together letters and numbers. Her name, while not

a known word was something you could read and say in American English on the first attempt.

Oh yes, that show was good. Drama and suspense and expert presentation. But what does she get out of it? Is it worth the effort in terms of money? How does she deal with the emotional fallout? Is it hard to keep asking people for money? Does her investment pay off?

One way to find out, I decide. So I go back, and she is still there.

"I'll make you a counteroffer. Five hundred for your story."

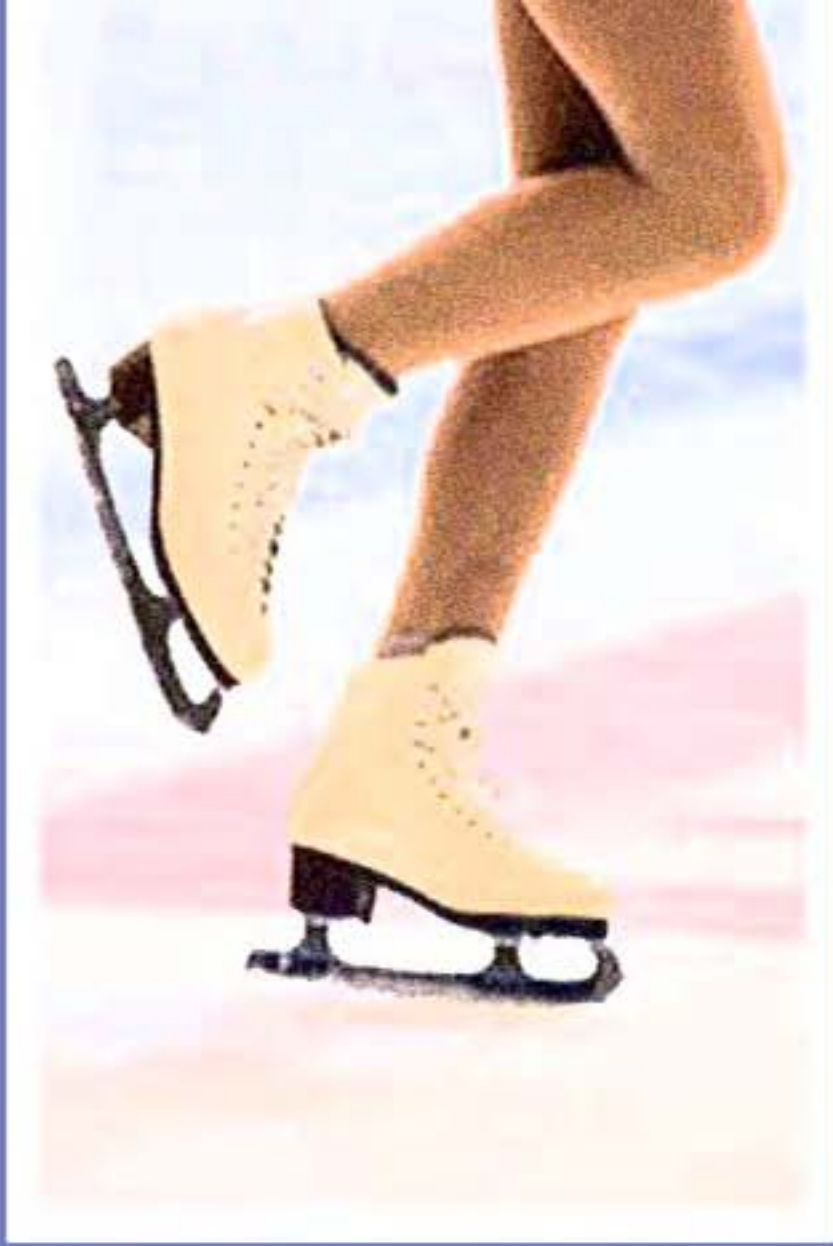
(Silence)

(DOH again! I could have known that too. She has me muted.)

(And I was going to stop this OOC nonsense. Really.)

In the end, I have one answer, which just may be better than none. I know why she can keep her cool when people yell at her. And that is really all I understood. And should you run across her, my offer is still good. Five hundred for the story. But I'll bet you a thousand she'll not take it.

· r — e — z ·



Gentleman On Ice by Harry Ba



iley

Good morning and welcome to a whole new year! Yes, you did party on until almost dawn on New Year's Eve and experienced some of those wonderful "rewards" that come from a night out on the town. This gentleman knows that the crisp January morning brings the chance to explore a totally different form of physical activity, along with, of course, romance if one desires.

One of the joys of SL is the ability to avoid those challenging RL issues that usually attach themselves to our New Year's resolutions: get more exercise, lose some weight, do something entirely new and unpredictable, make new friends, save more money, and the list goes on! Well this, my wonderful

friends, is what SL is all about and no better time to really appreciate that than January.

SL offers a most amazing breadth of winter sports venues and romantic winter romantic escapes. This gentleman loves to explore his way across SL and discover all the talents he didn't realize he possessed. For this month's reading and fun, I share with you a few places where your skills will amaze you as well as the partner you bring along.

What could be more romantic than that moonlit sleigh ride snuggled in close. The 6th Annual Winter Festival at Aero Pines provides not only the sleigh for two but a free horse rezzer to provide the power! Alas, you must direct

this horse along the path you wish to take around the sim, but then he is only a horse. The path winds along a snow covered shore and you will discover perhaps some free goodies along the way if you keep your eyes open. But then this might not happen if you are in the arms of someone special ;)

Haven't you always been in awe of those talented YOUNG snowboarding acrobats who make it look so easy during the Olympics? If so, then head out and give



this sport a try. Free snowboard boots and a snowboard rezzer are available, for the novice as well as the professional. You do need to be fairly skilled, however, to take on this sport - even in SL. On this gentleman's first trip down the course he found himself headfirst in a stable half way down the slope. I doubt I have the potential to become Olympic material even in SL.



And that also brings up a key point of winter sports. You will need clothing and equipment. DSL Skate Park and Holiday Mall provide some useful shopping venues, from outfits to skates and even sleighs if one so desires. As you know, I do enjoy my dancing and I even discovered a 12 ice dance animation system at this mall. It is not for those resolving to control their SL costs, unfortunately, as it weighs in at \$L12,000! I don't believe that will be an addition to my personal home ice dancing rink this season but one can always dream, of course.

Presuming you are not inclined to put ice dancing animations at your SL home either, then one of the great places for ice dancing and skating, single or couples, is over at Wolf

Mountain, a longtime venue. This has some great shops for winter sports clothing and various lodges and romantic hideaways. They also have a ski lift and downhill skiing. Again, you might take a while to master this skill but, heck, it's fun to go over the edge, through the trees, and into the rocks - after all, we can all fly and teleport, so go for it! You haven't really experienced winter sports to the fullest unless you have gone down the Wolf Mountain ski run in your ice skates!

For those who want to really feel the experience of serious skiing, then perhaps some European skiing in the Alps? FRANCE 3D is the place for you. This sim has skiing with downhill runs marked out for both skis or snowboarding! Just remember to STOP

when you get to that FINISH line at the bottom! For those faint of heart who prefer their excitement in a bit less dangerous style, then the tubing slide is the place for you. Bring a friend, rezz a

at the Aero Pines park mentioned above and at Wolf Mountain. I had no idea I knew all those amazing ice dancing moves! Want something more romantic and a bit less strenuous? Try a

Romance lives out on those crisp winter nights among the whispering pines under those warm wollen blankets

couple of snow tubes and race down the slide to the ice bar at the bottom. REMEMBER, sled first, BAR second! While you can make a donation to this venue's tube run, when PG rode it down it automatically refunded his lindens.

I also found many, many more wonderful and exciting spots as I played my way across SL winter sports, including some great synced stylized ice dancing

canoe for two down miles of ice canyons.

Or are you more the ride 'em hard and take no prisoners sort of winter sport adventurer? The PG once rode a snowmobile back and forth across the US Continental Divide during a snowstorm in that other life we sometimes mistake for "real." You too can be a snowmobile menace!



Now, at this point you should have gotten lots of New Year's exercise - perhaps lost a little weight in the process, tried more than one new experience for 2013, visited a foreign country and avoided spending many Linden (what with all the freebie sports equipment and animations available), and hopefully discovered a few new friends along the slopes or in the bars over hot buttered rum.

If you already have someone special in your life then you should also have made absolutely certain to adventure into some of the secluded spots out

there among the pine trees and lovely log lodges on the slopes. Remember, Romance lives out on those crisp winter nights among the whispering pines under those warm woolen blankets listening to the silence broken only by sleigh bells.

And should you happen to ski or snowmobile across my path this January, please do say Hi and try not to kill me in the process! Swoooooosh!

• r e z •



A Lack of Art by Crap Mariner

I was walking down the street on a beautiful day, when I was overcome by a strange feeling.

My balance failed me, and I collapsed.

An ambulance arrived, and the paramedics quickly checked my vital signs.

"When was the last time you were at a museum?" one asked.

"I don't remember," I said.

"THIS MAN IS SUFFERING FROM A LACK OF ART!" shouted the other paramedic, and I was loaded into the ambulance.

"The Downtown Contemporary is on drive-by," said the driver. "But we'll get you to a local gallery. It's just two blocks away."

And the siren wailed on.



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The SL Arts and Life Magazine



Encro

by



achment

Drover Mahogany

it came creeping up on me

stealthy, unforeseen, no hints of presence –

or none that i then had wit to read –

after my head slammed all unwitting

onto tiled base of shower floor

but i'm not thinking clearly yet, oh no
struggle long it seems to roll onto hands and knees
and then senselessly to my feet
holding tight to shower rail
my head starts spinning, the room rotates
my gut is churning, nausea intense
weakly call the family aware of desperate need
but rooms away they cannot hear
grimly hold that shower rail to no avail
come to myself, no knowledge of before or now,
time slows down, matching my brain state
prone on back again, head butting bathroom door

so much weaker now, distressed to my core
i remember one thought: i'm in trouble
facile thinking's the absolute best i can do
again i climb this mountain to my feet
unable to comprehend two attempts abortive,
my brain, so deprived of blood, unaware it's unaware
opening and clutching door, again i feebly call help
irrationally, perversely, stagger to shower stall
to finish this trial the fates have given me
there my wife finds me –
half an hour way too long for showering –
in dread fascination heaving blood red and black
incapable of thought and certainly of talk

Editor in Chief
Flor Nachtigal

Art Director
Jami Mills

Production Manager
Friday Blaisdale

Distribution
Stacey Rome

Writers
Flor Nachtigal
Gudrun Gausman
Harry Bailey
Sedona Mills
Crap Mariner
Drover Mahogany

Editors
Friday Blaisdale

Copy Editors
Friday Blaisdale
Jami Mills

Graphics Editor
Jami Mills

Photographers
Jami Mills